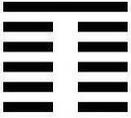


Hexagram 23 – Separating from What Harms



*Separating from what harms.
Cannot further life on Earth.*

Image Tradition

*Separating from what harms. Separating, indeed.
Complicity degrades adherence to the sacred way, indeed.
Cannot further life on Earth.
The willingness to harm in the person long-living indeed.
Yielding to the sacred ways and also not harming the sacred.
Overseeing the connections with the sacred indeed.
A sage replaces harming with caring.
The sacred wholeness of the Earth Interbeing moves indeed.*

Patterns of Wisdom

*Mountain joins the Earth.
Separating from what harms.
Kind and generous with others.
Settled and tranquil within.*

Structure:

- The weak lines cause the downfall of the strong line at the top by sinking downward, taking the ground away from it.
- Mountain trigram over Earth trigram. Stillness and resting within the strength of the Earth.

Image: The top line pictures the roof of a house. The house breaks asunder when the roof collapses.

The hexagram marks the 9th month in the Chinese calendar (October – November) and the beginning of winter. The dark of the year overtakes the light ever more powerfully, threatening to completely overwhelm it. The fundamental laws of the sacred universe cause the natural alteration of increase and decrease, fullness and emptiness. The yielding lines gradually and imperceptibly weaken the strong lines until they collapse.

This hexagram describes the time when harmful forces degrade the conditions and values necessary to maintain life. The harmful culture denies the sacred and destroys the Earth Interbeing, tearing down what the wise have achieved and ignoring the suffering it causes in its rush for ever more wealth and power. We increasingly separate from what furthers life on Earth when we believe in our superiority over life and the Earth and willingly harm others for self-benefit. Our complicity in harming the Earth Interbeing extinguishes our spiritual path.

When dangerously harmful forces deteriorate the necessary conditions for life on Earth, the wise separate themselves from what harms. They vigilantly separate themselves from impulses to harm others and the Earth for self-benefit and deepen their spiritual being. By caring for those that suffer and dissolving the conditions that cause suffering, the wise strengthen the wholeness of the Earth

Interbeing and fulfill its purpose to further life on Earth. Outwardly, they extend generosity and kindness to others while inwardly they remain settled and tranquil. Thus, the sacred ways survive,¹ and the path to further life on Earth has no end. When the harms of inequality peak, the sacred path leads us to separating from what harms and remedying the suffering the harms have caused.

Line 1: The harmful forces advance and degrade the supports for resting within the sacred. The erosion of the resolve to adhere to the ways of the wholeness begins here.

Line 2: The disintegrating forces grow stronger and generate divisiveness. Those who turn away from the sacred path face calamity. The line has no support to further life on Earth.

Line 3: Disintegrating influences and wrongdoings surround this isolated line, yet it remains free of blame because of its adherence to the ways of wholeness. It attains stability by rejecting the hierarchy of above and below and knowing the equality of all.

Line 4: Here the harmful forces affects not only the line's spiritual path but its very being. The danger has reached its peak, and nothing stops it. The culture's willingness to harm others for self-benefit completely overwhelm the line. Misfortune arrives.

Line 5: The line voluntarily sacrifices its willingness to harm for self-benefit and submits to the sacred. It leads the other weak lines to the sacred and transmutes the culture's destructive ways into what furthers life on Earth. All goes well.

Line 6: The splitting apart reaches its end. The willingness to harm others and the Earth for self-benefit harms not only the Earth Interbeing but destroys itself as well. The strong line at the top embodies the seed of the future. When the strong line changes into a weak line, it collapses into the Earth, and the wholeness of the Earth Interbeing sprouts anew without any cessation.

The sage again attains influence and effectiveness. It receives common support to further life on Earth. When disaster comes to a peak, people naturally think of ways to remedy it. The people's desire for healing leads to living the ways of wholeness.

¹ **The Ways of the Wholeness of Earth Interbeing:** We center our lives on the sacred, our refuge, support and teacher. We yield to the sacred command to care for each other and the Earth by furthering life on Earth. We have the compassionate wisdom to know how to further life on Earth as a being and an interbeing. We know the equality of all life on Earth and compassionately care for all. We give back to the Earth Interbeing for what we take. We self-discipline to overcome what keeps us apart and to embody the sacred Earth Interbeing ways of wholeness. We act responsibly to prove our wisdom by compassionately responding to suffering and by transforming the conditions that cause suffering. We hold ourselves accountable to living the sacred ways of furthering life on Earth. (Rev. 6/8/25)